

## Service Area Strategic Plan

Department of Social Services (765)

Service Area 7 of 33

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance (765 452 01)****Description**

This service area funds the cash assistance payments made to extremely low-income families as part of one of the Commonwealth's key safety net programs, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program. To be eligible for the program, a family must include a dependent child and have income of approximately 25 percent or less of the poverty threshold, about \$7,000 per year for a family of three. Unless exempt, participants are required to work or participate in a work activity as a condition of their continued eligibility. No participant may receive more than 60 months of TANF cash assistance during her or his lifetime. The average payment is \$271 per month, and most families stay on cash assistance less than one year with more than half leaving assistance within 6 months.

**Background Information****Mission Alignment and Authority**

- *Describe how this service supports the agency mission*

By assisting needy families, TANF cash assistance payments help individuals triumph over poverty and shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities. The TANF program enables the Commonwealth's most vulnerable and needy families to meet their basic human needs and rebuild their lives. This assistance often helps those served avoid the unfortunate trade-off between housing, food and medical care.

- *Describe the Statutory Authority of this Service*

Title IV-A of the Social Security Act

•45 CFR 260 – 286

•Code of Virginia, §63.2-600-607, 612, 613, 614, 617, 618

•22 VAC 40-295

**Customers**

Agency Customer Group	Customer	Customers served annually	Potential annual customers
Individuals, Children and Families (served unknown; potential unlimited)	Low-income Individuals and Families	150,000	200,000

**Anticipated Changes To Agency Customer Base**

From 2000 to 2003 (most recent Census data), the number of Virginians living in poverty increased 28%, with 740,000 Virginians now living below the federal poverty threshold. This change is likely to increase the number of eligible households and the number of applicants for the program.

## Partners

Partner	Description
Local Departments of Social Services	
State Agencies	

## Products and Services

- *Factors Impacting the Products and/or Services:*

Reauthorization of TANF has been passed. Congressional action related to TANF reauthorization has had major implications for service delivery in Virginia. Additionally, inflation erodes the purchasing power of the cash assistance grant because the grants are in no way indexed or contain a cost of living increase as do other safety net programs including Food Stamps. Grant levels have only been updated once in the last 20 years (July 2000). Without an annual increase to keep pace with inflation, the value of the assistance provided to the most vulnerable Virginians will continue to diminish. Virginia has one of the lowest cash assistance benefit levels in the nation (41st).

- *Anticipated Changes to the Products and/or Services*

Direct deposit of funds, rather than check issuance of benefits, is now available. The Department of Social Services will promote this option and will over time, convert more cases to the direct deposit or other electronic means.

- *Listing of Products and/or Services*

- Economic assistance to low-income families/individuals or nutrition, child care, health care eligibility, and financial assistance to low-income families/individuals
- Financial support for children

## Finance

- *Financial Overview*

TANF cash assistance payments are funded by a combination of federal and general funds. The federal funds come from the State Family Assistance Grant, commonly referred to as the TANF Block Grant.

- Financial Breakdown

	Fiscal Year 2009		Fiscal Year 2010	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$56,203,346	\$61,969,968	\$56,203,346	\$61,969,968
Change To Base	\$-5,725,753	\$0	\$-5,725,753	\$0
Service Area Total	\$50,477,593	\$61,969,968	\$50,477,593	\$61,969,968

### Service Area Objectives

- Efficiently provide financial assistance to needy families with children

#### Alignment to Agency Goals

- Agency Goal: Maximize the economic independence, safety and stability of individuals and families.

#### Objective Measures

- Percent of TANF applications processed in a timely manner

Governor's Key:

No

Measure Type:

Output

Measure Frequency:

Annual

Frequency Comment: % of TANF applications processed in timely manner

Measure Baseline: 93% of applications were processed in a timely manner in SFY 2005.

Measure Target: 95% of applications will be processed in a timely manner by the end of SFY 2010.

Data Source and Calculation: The data will be derived from ADAPT.